

I have been very concerned in recent months about the deterioration of objectivity and balance in the broadcast media. Recent changes in FCC rules that allow large corporations to dominate the media within communities, plus the lack of requirements for stations to air opposing views, are not in the public interest. A democracy cannot function without the free exchange of ideas, and many stations no longer support or promote that free exchange.

A particularly frightening example of corporate bias in the media is Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary during prime time shortly before the election. Local stations should be allowed to decide if such programming serves the needs of their communities, and if they do decide to air a controversial program about a public figure, they should be required to provide time to those who would like to correct or refute the information presented in the program.

Control of the airwaves by Sinclair and other media giants stifles political discussion, fosters extremism, contributes to the polarization of our society, and endangers our democracy. None of those outcomes is in the public interest.

We need to strengthen media ownership rules and hold media owners accountable for the truth and fairness of their programming. At license renewal time, stations should be required to prove that they provide accurate, balanced information -- not just corporate propaganda -- to the public. Thank you.